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PIETRO OF SIENA



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TORONTO

PIETRO OF SIENA

A DRAMA

BY

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1910

CHARACTERS

PIETRO TORNIELLI	.	{	<i>Head of the ancient and exiled house of Tornielli.</i>
LUIGI GONZAGA	.	{	<i>Head of the rival and reigning house of Gonzaga.</i>
ANTONIO	.	.	<i>Podesta of Siena.</i>
MONTANO	.	.	{ <i>Boon Companion and Jackal to Pietro.</i>
ANSELMO	.	.	{ <i>An Aged Warrior devoted to the Tornielli.</i>
GIACOMO	.	.	<i>Jailor of the State Prison.</i>
AN EXECUTIONER.			
PULCI	.	.	} <i>Personal friends of Luigi.</i>
CARLO	.	.	
GEMMA GONZAGA	.	.	<i>Sister to Luigi.</i>
FULVIA TORNIELLI	.	.	<i>Sister to Pietro.</i>
CATERINA	.	.	<i>An Aged Nurse devoted to Gonzaga.</i>

OFFICERS, MESSENGERS, ETC.

The action of the play is confined to Siena and lies
between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

ACT I

SUNSET

ACT I

SCENE.—*The great hall of the ancient palace of the Gonzaga. At either end stand armed sentries. In the centre is the judgement chair. On the rising of the curtain furious shouts are heard without, and grow louder at times as from an approaching multitude, and the besieging army of PIETRO. LUIGI is discovered striding to and fro in great perplexity. His friend PULCI is watching him earnestly. The time is sunset.*

PULCI. Luigi, go forth, and show thyself at last !

Still the gate holds ; though Pietro Tornielli
Three times in vain hath shaken it—Go forth !
He makes enough of clamour and of din ;
Thou liest like a rat, unseen, unheard ;
Whom can we fight for, or for what ? Go forth !

LUIGI. No, Pulci, no ! Pietro Tornielli
Advancing takes the wind from all my sails.

He crows me from afar, and quells my spirit,
I know not why or how ; but I am quelled,
Like English Richard before Bolingbroke.

It is not that he hath more wit than I,
It is not that he hath more will than I ;
Only that on this man success attends.

Where I am foiled and thwarted, he goes free.
Such men there are, and what they will, they
grasp. *[A louder uproar without.]*

PULCI. This is the sophistry that fears to
act.

LUIGI. *[Pausing.]* Think with what injuries
this man comes armed :

He comes not merely to supplant my rule,
To seat himself where I so long have sat,
But furious memory smoulders at his heart.
Did not our father bear his mother off,
And use her for his lust ? His father pined,
And kept a dreadful silence till he died.
With all these memories this man comes
fraught,

And thunders an avenger at our gate.

[A sentinel rushes in from the left.]

SENTINEL. The gate has been surrendered ;
they swarm in ;

And hither are they making with loud cry !

[A cry louder and nearer. Enter GEMMA GONZAGA hurriedly and terrified, the nurse CATERINA limping behind.]

GEMMA. Luigi, what can I do in this dark hour ?

How aid and comfort ? Send me not away !

For thou and I have grown together so

We may not be divided but with blood.

Your hopes, your thoughts are mine ; your frailties mine.

Brother, let me be near thee in the storm.

I claim its lightning and its thunder clasp.

Ah, send me not away ! I put my arms

About you as of old : now come what will.

[Sound as of door below broken open.]

LUIGI. Sister, they come ! This scene is not for thee :

Go then within and quietly ; I alone

Must stand upright against the towering wave.

[Exit GEMMA and CATERINA.]

[Soldiers enter and are drawn up along the walls of the hall. Then enter the Mayor ANTONIO, surrounded by citizens of Siena, a Priest, and, lastly, PIETRO, his sister FULVIA following him.]

PIETRO. Luigi Gonzaga, I might well have stormed

Siena gate with fiery memories

And with the sword of vengeance sought thee out.

Thy father with hot lips kissed out the soul

Of her that bore me, and my father broke

Down to the ground and wrapped in mortal shame.

I say, Gonzaga, that I bear enough

Of private injury to spill thy blood.

On no such crimson errand am I sped,

But summoned by Siena's citizens,

Here to resume the sovereignty possessed

Erst by the Tornielli : and to purge

The city of thee and thy iniquities.

[*He ascends the judgement chair, motioning to*

ANTONIO.

Now read aloud the charges 'gainst this man.

ANTONIO. [*Reading.*] "It is here charged against thee, Luigi Gonzaga, that thou hast taken bribes to set aside the course of justice, whereof many instances can be proven. Further : that thou hast surrounded thee with a troop of desperate malcontents whom thou hast paid and used for purposes of private quarrel. Moreover,

that two famous enemies of thine thou hast by poison taken off, having bidden them to supper here in this palace. That thou hast offered to spare the life of Paolo Gerli if his daughter would deliver herself to thee for purposes of lust ; though this man had been condemned by public tribunal over which thou didst thyself preside. And many other counts are here set down against thee, but for the moment let these suffice."

PIETRO. Luigi Gonzaga, what hast thou to say ?

LUIGI. All that is charged against me I confess.

PIETRO. Then, for these violent ills a violent cure

Demand, and a swift, instant medicine—

I, Pietro Tornielli, summoned here

To adjudicate upon Siena's wrong,

Hereby pronounce upon thee doom of death !

And since delays in these distracted streets

Were perilous : to-morrow thou shalt die.

[*Writing.*] I, Pietro Tornielli, called by the people of Siena to heal the breach and woe of the city, do hereby commit Luigi Gonzaga, sometime ruler of Siena, to prison this night to the

intent that at sunrise to-morrow he may be executed. Given by me this day.

PIETRO TORNIELLI.

LUIGI. At sunrise ! Ah, not death ! Ah, not so soon !

Let me still watch the sun thro' prison bars,
And manacled behold the rising moon.

Ah, send me not from glory to the grave.

I promise in my cell I will not stir

All day, and will not speak even to myself,

Or murmur an angry word until my death ;

Ah, hold me, Sir, in prison till I die.

How can I trouble thee ; none breaks away

Or bursts that massy fortress. Can I lead

Rebellion, fettered fast and deep immured ?

Deliver me to long imprisonment !

Or banish me an exile from the shore

Of Italy for ever : Let me roam

The limits of the world and utmost isles.

Only I pray thee let me breathe ! To go

For ever from the sun ! I care not what

Of heavy misery or imprisonment

Thou mayst inflict if only I may live.

[He breaks into sobs.]

PIETRO. Luigi Gonzaga, freely thou hast
drunk

The purple cup of life ; now not to wince,
To beat the breast befits thee in this hour.
Sweet was the draught, now fling the cup away !
And having richly lived, so strongly die.
Bear him away.

LUIGI. Sir ! Sir !

PIETRO. Bear him away !

[LUIGI is taken off between two guards, four others following.]

PIETRO. [Rising.] Now for the moment
nothing more detains us.

ANSELMO. [Coming forward.] Sir, this man
whom you have dispatched to die,
A sister has ; and though the rabble rise
Against the brother for his many crimes,
She may untouched through all Siena pass,
For she is beautiful and still and pure.
She is a greater peril than the man,
And while she lives, thy throne will tremble
still.

PIETRO. Is she within the palace ?

AN ATTENDANT. Sir, she is.

PIETRO. Send for her hither.

[Exit Attendant.]

ANSELMO. In this warrant add
To Luigi, Gemma, to the brother's name

The sister ; so we root out the whole house,
No son nor daughter of Gonzaga lives
Save these ; then make an end and sit secure.

[*Enter GEMMA escorted by Attendants.*]

PIETRO. Art thou the sister of Gonzaga—
say !

GEMMA. I am, Sir.

PIETRO. He hath been so deeply charged
With public crime and private injury
That I, called in to judge and to pronounce,
To prison have committed him, that he
May die to-morrow at sunrise.

GEMMA. Ah, no !

Ah, do not slay him ! Wonderful has been
The love between us—and so soon to die !
Why, he hath but a few brief hours to pray ;
To reconcile him with eternal God,
Only the transit of a summer night.
Oh, Sir, at least be merciful to me !
And send me to him that I too may die.
Let me not wither out this hollow world
Alone ; but in that warrant add my name
To his ; for all his frailties I defend,
In all his acts I am associate.
I would give up the very ghost in me,
And my dear soul would put in pawn for him.

Then by the same blow let the sister fall !
I crave to die with the first light of dawn.
Ah, separate us not, here I beseech thee !

[She throws herself at his feet.]

ANSELMO. Enough ! By her own mouth
she merits death.

PIETRO. *[With slow hesitation.]* I cannot
—for the moment—well decide.

[Angry murmurs from ANSELMO's troops.]

That I have doomed her brother is no cause
Why her too I should doom ! Is it supposed
A maiden, but a year ago a child,
Could of his crimes and bribes be cognizant ?
I ask you all—were it not well to pause ?
To pause for a few hours, and hesitate
Finally to pronounce ? What thou hast said,
Anselmo, I doubt not is wise, but I
A little leisure must demand in this.
Lead her away ! *[To GEMMA.]* Ere dawn
thou shalt receive

My judgement. *[She is escorted within.]* Now,
Sirs, I would be alone.

*[Exeunt all but ANSELMO, GIROLAMO,
FULVIA, and MONTANO.]*

ANSELMO. Sir, if this foolish mercy to the
house

Which hath so deeply wronged you, be displayed,
I cannot pledge me for these faithful bands
That hitherto have followed your wild star.
Sparing his sister's life, you but ascend
A trembling throne, for men who hated him
Will rally to her face as to a flag.
Ah, God ! 'tis the old weakness of the blood.
What stopped us at Ancona ? what made vain
The long siege of Perugia ? Evermore
A woman's face hath foiled us. Now I speak
Once, and no more. Thy followers will fall off
Being again deceived ; much have they borne,
But more they will not bear.

[Sullen murmurs are heard.]

Strike down the house,
Strike to the root and ere the night be past.

[Exit ANSELMO, who is acclaimed by the troops awaiting him.]

GIROLAMO. *[Advancing.]* Pietro Tornielli !

Thus saith Rome :

Let none of the Gonzaga house be spared !
Nor man nor woman : end the pestilence
That brooded o'er Siena all these years.
If thou wouldst rule secure, blot out the brood
That are anathema to Holy Church !
If a fair face can shake thee from thy seat,

Look not to Rome ! Rather be thou of Rome
Outlawed, accursed. So speak I, and depart.

[*Exit GIROLAMO with attendant Priests.*

FULVIA. [*Approaching PIETRO.*] Brother,
what hath been said by Holy Church,
Or by Anselmo speaking for the State,
Is well, and well enough. I am a woman,
And cannot easily forget the shame
Wrought on our mother by their father ; now
Comes in revenge though late, and justice too.
These are his children, his ; the man who
wronged
Her, and brought down our father to his grave.
He hath left issue luckily, for us
To dash our ire on, let his children die !
Not one, but both. Have we not waited long ?
Have I not in my pillow set my teeth
Through the grim night to stop these memories ?
But here they are delivered to our hands.
Hast thou forgot thy mother's desperate death,
Hast thou forgot the pining of thy sire ?
Here with one blow we clear us before God,
That she in that sea-tomb no longer toss
Unsatisfied ; nor he call from the ground.
Art thou the victim of a passing face ?
Art thou the helpless spoil of shadowed eyes ?

Art thou a man, or but a drifting leaf,
Unworthy to be served or followed, or loved ?
If that pale face can turn thee from thy wrongs,
Or a low voice make all thy vengeance vain.
I leave thee therefore to the blood of the dead.
This must thou expiate and swift and sure.

[*Exit FULVIA.*

PIETRO. Give me some wine, Montano ! Oh,
Montano,
The fever's in my blood and must have vent.

MONTANO. What fever ?

PIETRO. For a face a moment since
Sprung like a sudden splendour on the dusk,
Now vanished ; for a voice that stole on us
Like strings from planets dreaming in faint
skies,

With a low pleaded music ; for a form
Slight and a little bending over in dew.
This night, Montano, in this coming dark
I must possess her ; for I shall not sleep,
Knowing her breathing sweet so near to me,
Here in this palace ; no ! nor shall I drowse
Until I clasp her fast and kisses rain
Upon her lips, her eyes, her brow, her hair.

MONTANO. Sir, you well know I serve your
every mood,

But here, is not the game too perilous ?
Here on the very first night of your rule
To seize Gonzaga's sister, he meanwhile
Purposely prisoned—ah, so they will say—
So that he may not mar, nor intervene.
Let policy propose some slower way.

PIETRO. No ! No ! such beauty must be
stormed, not snared,
Caught up and kissed into oblivion,
To saddle hoist, and through the world away !

MONTANO. I scent a way by which she might
be won
And without force, and on this very night.

PIETRO. How ? how ?

MONTANO. Her brother Luigi at sunrise
To-morrow, perishes ; now he to her
Is more than just a brother ; they have lived
Even from the cradle a life intertwined.
Remember but the burning words of her !
“ I would give up the very ghost of me,
And my dear soul would put in pawn for him.”

PIETRO. Well—well—

MONTANO. The dawn will come soon, all too
soon
For her ; but were it breathed into her ear,
That for her beauty thou wouldst spare his life,

Would not her deep love to thy arms consent ?
As slowly all the sky grows lighter, still,
And Luigi's blood is on the morning cloud,
Will she not for her brother give herself
To thee, and in thy clasp forget the dawn ?

PIETRO. See, see her ; with the nurse have
first a word,
That she may sound her warily. But haste !
Darkness already closes on us two,
And if I have my will 'twill be ere dawn.
Speed, speed away, Montano, be thou swift !
And I with every flower will fill the room
With fume of lilies and raptures of the rose,
And odours that entice the drowsing brain,
And far-off music melting on the soul.
At once away till thou hast news of her.

[*Exit* MONTANO.]

Come, night, and falling give her to my arms.
What fools are they that use thee but for sleep ;
Come and enfold us in the dark of bliss !

ACT II
MIDNIGHT

SCENE I

SCENE.—*Midnight. A dark part of the gardens of the palace ; various followers of ANSELMO assembled with torches. To them enter ANSELMO with four followers, also carrying torches.*

ANSELMO. Comrades, to this dark garden,
and in night

I have swiftly summoned you : you all well
know

That I have followed Tornielli's star,
Howe'er it wavered in the heavens ; and you
How often have I led to the desperate breach,
Or to that timely charge which all decides.

And yet you can recall that oftentimes
Here were we foiled, or here : and this the
cause,

Ever a woman's face Pietro marred.
The weakness in his blood undid our toil.
Now at Siena, crown of all our hopes,

And destined to the Tornielli rule,
When vengeance is demanded, he falls short ;
And cannot lift his hand against the face
Too beautiful, of Luigi's sister. Him
Easily he condemned to die at dawn,
Yet he would not complete the task imposed.
He wavers through the night, and will not act.
Now none hath been more faithful to his star
Than I, but I that star will follow not
If at the supreme hour we must be fooled.
You as you please will act : but now no more
Lean upon me to lead you as of old.

A SOLDIER. I will speak bolder than our
Captain. What
If he should be persuaded by this girl
To spare the brother's life ? [*Angry murmurs.*]
How do we stand ?

Were ever soldiers on such errand fooled ?
I say that on this very night, perhaps,
While here we stand, she hath persuaded him
To cancel the decree of death at dawn.
So is our march, our battery, our spoil
Made vain for ever : who henceforth will trust
A ruler palpably to beauty weak,
At mercy of red lips and drooping eyes ?
Shall this man rule Siena ? Never man

In all Siena will to this consent.
Pietro Tornielli can fight well,
Is not in courage backward, but this fault
Will leave him unsupported and alone.

[Angry shouts and murmurs.]

ANSELMO. Friends, let us see what darkness
brings to light,
If then my apprehension be revealed,
Or worse, our comrades' fear ; at least at dawn
Let us assemble here : with knowledge then,
We our own way can take, e'en tho' it be
To assault the palace and slay Pietro. Speak !
Is this agreed ? *[Shouts. All drawing swords.]*
Anselmo, 'tis agreed.
[The scene closes.]

SCENE II

SCENE.—*An inner room of the palace ; with a door communicating with a further room, which is closed. A lamp is burning on the table. The old nurse CATERINA is seated near the window with bowed head and in deep grief. A knock is heard at the door. She hobbles toward it, and opening it admits MONTANO.*

MONTANO. Signora Caterina ?

CATERINA. That is I.

MONTANO. I see that you are broken down with grief.

Give me your hand. [*He leads her to a seat.*

The reason of these tears
Is easily guessed. Luigi Gonzaga dies
With the first flush of day. This is the cause ?

CATERINA. Ah, sir, if my own son had then
to die,

I could not suffer more. I have no son ;

But he took on him all the unborn child,
That never quickened in the might have been.
I have watched him as a gardener does a flower,
And seen him slowly grow into his strength.
Ah, who can say I had not pangs from him.
What he hath done I know not to deserve
So swift a death ; only that he must die
I know. *[She breaks again into sobs.*

MONTANO. You know not yet. I bring
a hope.

CATERINA. Oh, that he may be saved, may
be released !

Sir, do not trifle with a soul so old,
Or play with cracking heart-strings !

MONTANO. I will not.
I come from Pietro Tornielli straight.
Where is your mistress ?

CATERINA. Dumb, and as the dead
Within she sits, fixed on the coming day.

MONTANO. She, she alone can save him if
she will.

CATERINA. *[Stumbling to inner door.]* Ah,
Gemma, Gemma !

MONTANO. *[Taking her arm.]* Peace, and
sit you down.

To you I'll tell the terms of his release,

You then to her ; and she shall then decide.

CATERINA. Terms ! but there are no terms
she will not give,

Life even !

MONTANO. Perhaps a harder thing is asked.

CATERINA. Harder than life ! What is so
dear as breath ?

MONTANO. To a woman one thing only.

[*A pause.*

CATERINA. Still I grope
In darkness. What can Gemma give more
dear

Than very life ?

MONTANO. More dear ? her very soul.

CATERINA. I seem to guess more clearly
now. You mean——

MONTANO. I mean—for the night passes,
and already

Is little time for words—Lord Tornielli

Will spare the life of Luigi but to hold

His sister in his arms this very night.

Am I now plain enough ?

CATERINA. Aye—plain enough !
Had it been life——

MONTANO. It is not life he asks

CATERINA. Oh, what a dreadful choice !

MONTANO. Yet on these terms,
And these alone can Luigi's life be spared.

CATERINA. She will not do it, never, never,
never !

MONTANO. Still lay the chance before her :
see you how

Already the stars pale ; the time is short.
He from his dungeon watches how they pale.
You as a woman to another may,
With what authority and wisdom else
May prompt, disclose, and may at last persuade.
I'll leave you to her—then I will return
To know her verdict on her brother's life.

[*Going, then returning.*

Remember paling stars and coming sun !

[*Exit* MONTANO.

CATERINA. Ah, God ! must I, this old and
shrunk voice

Use to persuade her white soul to this act ?
She hath been filled with pity for the fallen,
Yet with that pity hath so loathed the cause.
So innocent and yet so understanding,
She hath been so gentle to those sinners, yet
Sick with abhorrence but to think their sin.
But, Luigi, any sacrifice for thee !
Gemma, my child, Gemma. [*She goes to door.*

I must have word

A moment with you.

[*Enter GEMMA white and with a fixed movement.*

One has left me but

A moment, who brought word from Tornielli.

GEMMA. No word can ever reach my ear
but one,

And that one "death," "death," "death"
for evermore. .

CATERINA. Gemma, sit here, and I will
kneel and lay
My old face in your lap.

GEMMA. As I how oft
Have laid my face, old nurse, down in your
lap,
Dreaming, to hear thee tell of fairyland.
But, ah, no fairyland is with us now !
But life, how grey and cruel—ah, and death !

CATERINA. Do not start from me, nor
fall swooning down,
At that I have to say—Luigi——

GEMMA. O listen !
Do you not hear the stones down on him
falling ?

CATERINA. It is not yet resolved that he
shall die.

GEMMA. What, what ! Have I gripped
your arm too fast ? Yet speak !
This is some foolish comfort, shallow thought,
To ease me for a moment. Why, I heard
Pietro Tornielli—and to me
He spoke—declare aloud the doom of death.

CATERINA. He did so ; but he may repent
him yet.

GEMMA. But what hath chanced in these
brief hours to change
A state decree ? How is he sudden white
Who then so black was,—hath he been re-tried
All in a moment ? Ah, toy not with hope.

CATERINA. I tell you, Luigi's life may yet
be spared.

GEMMA. By whom then, how ? Who holds
the scales so fine ?

CATERINA. You !

GEMMA. [*Starting up.*] I ! how should I
save him ?

CATERINA. Can you not
A little guess and save my speech o'er rough ?
Did you not mark then Tornielli's glance ?
How in his speech he stumbled, while on you
His eyes were anchored : how, alarmed, his host
Cried out against delay and for thy life.

GEMMA. [*Passing her hand over her brow.*]

Yes, I remember his eyes fixed on me.

CATERINA. Now can you not conceive, and realise ?

And I my face will turn away from you.

GEMMA. Oh, now I see, and but this moment since

I have gulped down such a draught of this world's cup

As leaves me shivering, and to wind exposed.

This was the plan then ; like a beast, not man,

He would ensnare me for a fleshy hour,

Baiting the trap even with a brother's life.

You know, my Caterina, well you know

How I have loved my brother, if 'twere death,

That I would gladly suffer ; to expire,

And lose the sweet and music of this life.

All joy for ever to forego—for him,

Or if I must be stabbed, or poisoned—yes.

But this—not this ! He is not such a coward

That he would put his life into the scales

Against his sister's shame. I will not do it.

Oh, all the stars that muster in the heaven

Would cry on me with voices like to beams,

More awful in their silence to the soul.

I tell you, No, No ! And what more repels

My soul is this—a trap laid for my soul.
Again I say, baited with brother's blood !
I hate this man, I hate the mind that thought
This business out, this trader of the dark,
This burning merchant for a maiden's soul.
What should I be, old Caterina, what
For ever and for ever ? They who went
To flame for faith, they went not for this cause,
And out of scorching flesh deserved the stars.
The girl who yields beneath a summer moon,
That I can understand ; but never a true woman
Made bargain with her body such as this.
There is my answer, now and for all time.

CATERINA. Child, though I know what
 sickens in your soul,
Still, when all's said or thought, is't not enough
To bring back Luigi from the grave ? At dawn
Surely he dies. I as a woman speak,
Let this man vent his riot ; let the fool
Have his hot way, and suffer his embrace !
Yours is the laugh by daybreak, and for ever.
Think, then, of Luigi freed ! The world is
 wrong,
None catch perfection ; save your brother's life,
Spending an hour within those silly arms !
What are his kisses, if the grave is foiled ?

GEMMA. You, you persuade me to it?
You who nursed

Both of us ; why is it, then, that a nurse holds
Dearer the boy than the girl? he must be
spared,
She never !

CATERINA. What you do you do not do.

GEMMA. Ah, woman, but our bodies are our
souls !

[*Enter* MONTANO.

MONTANO. Ah, Signorina ! Straightway
from my lord,
Pietro Tornielli, I have come,
In the strong hope that you will speak to him.

GEMMA. What use so to pretend, and
gloze the truth?
You know well why this gentleman desires
To see me ; on this errand you are sent.
Take back my answer, then, I will not come.
I loved and love my brother, but he must die.

MONTANO. Is he so well prepared? And
can he launch
On such a voyage? What has been his life?
His public faults this day were charged on him.
None of them he denied : his private lusts
Are through Siena sounded publicly.

You, you alone cast his immortal soul
Before the conscious Judge, unripe and crude,
You, you alone can stay that dread assize.

[The hour strikes midnight.

The night wears out : and hearken how the
gong

With solemn syllables divides the night !

He hears them from the dungeon, stroke on
stroke.

What is thy hour to his eternity ?

GEMMA. Dead mother, tell me !

CATERINA. She to whom you cry
Remember was *his* mother.

GEMMA. I will come.

*[She takes down an old dagger from the wall
and hides it in her bosom secretly.*

CATERINA. See, let me set this red rose on
your breast.

GEMMA. Yes, yes, it is the colour of his
blood.

*[MONTANO motions the way out and he and
GEMMA exeunt.*

CATERINA. Oh, only for his life ! for the
boy's life !

Virgin in heaven, forgive me if I sinned !

SCENE III

SCENE.—*Another room in the palace ; distant music is heard, and various flowers are set about.*

PIETRO *turning from giving directions meets*
MONTANO, *who ushers in* GEMMA, *then immediately retires.*

PIETRO. Ah, Signorina, you are come at last !

GEMMA. I have come as one adorned for sacrifice,

Nothing omitted ; and this red flower see,
The symbol of a brother's blood !

PIETRO. You think
Too gravely.

GEMMA. Oh, too gravely ?

PIETRO. We must take
What chance we can when beauty is the goal.

GEMMA. You think, then, that this lure is
clever ?

PIETRO. No.

But by your face all right and wrong is dimmed.

GEMMA. This is the game ; the stakes, a
brother's life

And a girl's soul ; with these, then, you can
play.

PIETRO. I see my chance but as a gambler
sees.

GEMMA. You play with loaded dice, and
human too.

Listen ! I have come here to give myself
To you to snatch a brother's life ; but think !
Do I now for a moment give myself ?
I give you ice for fire, and snow for flame ;
Your touch I loathe, and shudder to be touched ;
Your kisses have no sweetness but for him.
I but endure, and listen for the dawn ;
And when you clasp me to your breast, I see
Behind your phantom face a rising sun.
You shadow ! murmur, kiss, do what you will,
I have forgotten you for evermore !
You ghost, with but the vantage of the grave,
O lover with cold murder on your lips,
Bridegroom whose gift is blood, whose dower
is death !

Ah, what a tryst ! What moonlight ever saw

Such a forbidden rapture as is this?

Then take me in your arms, but never me!

Or kiss these lips where lips have ceased to
move.

Fool, can you understand in your wild blood

That never shall you reach me on these terms?

How can you drink my beauty, if no soul

Makes the draught live? You bargain for a
bliss,

But no bliss from a bargain ever came.

That bliss may be too sudden, may be slow,

Howe'er it come; but it is thoughten wise,

Not planned, not calculated; be it sin

Or fire of angels, not this way it comes,

Nor ever hath: now to thy lips I yield

My own, but with a cold laugh in my soul,

Or else in dreadful thought thy kiss I take.

Now thou art master; thy brief hour demand!

But had I loved thee, Pietro, not this way

Would I have clasped thee, but in sacred fire,

And then shouldst thou have tasted of deep
life;

Then not of flesh, but of the endless soul.

But since this is so and this world endures,

[Taking the dagger from her breast.]

Let Luigi die! let him cease! and I with him.

PIETRO. [*Snatching the dagger from her hand.*]

Gemma Gonzaga, can you not believe
Your words have shaken into me a soul ?
What was a furious sport proposed, is now
The mighty meaning of a changed life.
Oh, it is true, most true, that I had planned
To use the seat of justice for thy lips.
So have I loved : not here nor there alone,
But everywhere pursuing my own prey.
So have I foiled my soldiers, and made vain
Cities besieged for lure of some fair face.
But now your revelation breaks on me ;
Even your sneer sublime and starry scorn
Has taken from my feet the under-world.
I would be what you say I cannot be :
Not with the ape-like wooing as of old,
But as a spirit suing thee through stars.
Gemma, here I discard the "whence" we came,
And I pursue the "whither" we are bound.
I'll lose thee not through too much lust of thee ;
Now if thou wouldst, I would not what I
 dreamed.
I see a distant pleasure deeper far,
For, if you will, I'll wed you without pause ;
And with the light of children's faces we,
Not worse for this encounter, will deserve

The falling sunset and the coming star,
And you perhaps shall smilingly recall
This plunge for beauty which hath ended sweet.
Say, will you wed me—kiss me and speak not.

GEMMA. I say no word but give to you my
lips.

But ah, my brother ! faint the dawn comes on,
But it is dawn.

PIETRO. [*Sounding gong and writing.*] Re-
lease on the instant Luigi Gonzaga, imprisoned
by my order in the prison of Faenza.

(Signed) PIETRO TORNIELLI.

[*A servant enters.*

Ride with this and ride fast !

[*Exit servant with the written order.*

Now comes the golden morning on us two,
And never a drop of dew that she bestows
Is like unto that dew that falls from you.
Here is my fury ended and wild hours.

GEMMA. I love you more than if your suit
had been

Pale, without fault, for I believe that he
Who once has wrongly burned can change that
fire

Into a radiance but to spirits clear.

[*He kisses her as the curtain descends.*

ACT III

SUNRISE

SCENE I

SCENE.—*The prison of Faenza ; LUIGI alone.*
The dawn is approaching.

LUIGI. The dawn, the dawn ! Now when
all wakes to life,
I wake to death. When all revives, I die.
This freshness and the coming colour make
The faint grave worse. Oh, but to die at dawn !
At midnight, yes ! but not when the world stirs,
When the Creator reassures the earth,
And reappears in balm out of the East.
Now I must give up life, now when the bird
Resumes its carol and the old music makes,
Now must I go to silence ; never there
The twitter of the brown bird in the leaves,
Nor rustle of foliage there, nor flushing sky.

[*He rises and walks restlessly to and fro.*
Now the bright river-fish leaps to the light,
Now creatures of the field bestir them, and speak

With mellow sound in twilight of the farm,
And shrilly Chanticleer proclaims the day.
Now the rose lifts her from a weight of dew,
Or raises her red bosom from the rain,
And many a pale flower from dark ground
revives.

Not far away, so little a space away,
Many a garden freshened by night's cloud,
Suspends its various odours from the earth,
And Nature sighing from good sleep awakes.
The sea is conscious of the invisible orb,
Revisiting in glory her faint flood.
The stars are gone, and balm breaks on the
world.

[He sits again.]

And in this moment I must yield my breath.

[Starting up again.]

And now not only Nature shakes off sleep,
But now the labourer to the field repairs
To dig the sweet earth, or to clip the hedge,
Or through the furrow follow on the plough.
Now wakes the young wife, and but half-awake
Kisses the dreaming babe beside her laid,
While all her deep heart murmurs in its ear.
The soldier starts up to the trumpet-call ;
The shopman takes the shutter from the shop,

And in the window carefully displays
His wares ; the trim girl unto market trips ;
And many a memory stares up at the sun.
And he who rides, and would the morning take,
To saddle springs, or he the morning dew
On foot meets gladly ; sweetly comes the day
To the sea-weary, watchers stung with brine ;
News of the absent to the bed is brought,
Letters from children in a world far-off.
And whether sad or sweet the world awake,
Whirls with a million graves about the sun.
Life, life begins ! And I this hour must die.

[*Still walking to and fro.*]

And who knows that we cease who seem to
cease ?

If I must answer, ere the dawn is full,
For all my faults and folly, and to whom ?
Haled before him who made us ; or to view
A heavy river rolling amid souls,
Or to remember in an outer dark.
Life ! life ! I cannot die, I dare not die,
And yonder cloud is slowly reddening !
She, too, she comes not, though she heard my
fate ;
I am by all deserted and bereft.
O Gemma, sister, you, you then at least

Might for the last time round me throw your
arms,

Giving the extreme kiss before my doom ;

But I must go to what I fear alone.

[A knock is heard at the door. Enter the

JAILOR, accompanied by the EXECUTIONER and an ASSISTANT.

JAILOR. Luigi Gonzaga, are you now prepared

Or will you see a priest, and in his ear

Confess and with a lighter bosom die ?

LUIGI. Is not my sister here ? has she not sent

A word, a little word ? I cannot think

That she will let me die in such a silence.

JAILOR. She is not here, and she has sent no word.

LUIGI. Oh, but she might ! It is not yet too late.

Give me a little more of time to breathe ;

She would not let me perish who so long

Has grown with me and loved me : I but ask

A little space to see her once, or hear

Her voice—is this unnatural ? if 'twere

One to whom passion drew me, even thus

Leave would be given, but my sister, sure

You'll not refuse to me a brief delay.

JAILOR. I have no order, and I have no
leave

To grant delay : immediate is my task,
And theirs who now await you.

LUIGI. Grant me then
A cup of wine : this is allowed ; then, then
I'll make no more delay : a cup of wine,
The last cup !

JAILOR. You shall have this ; but no more
Then can you tarry, or by force we bear you
To execution. [*To ASSISTANT.*] Fetch a cup
of wine. [*Exit ASSISTANT.*]

LUIGI. I cannot think why Gemma all this
while
Holds off from me ; she surely, if none else,
Would say farewell ; ah, strange her silence is.

[*Enter ASSISTANT with cup of wine, which
he gives into the hands of LUIGI.*]

Now for the last time do I taste of thee,
Juice of the grape ; I drink my final cup.

[*He drinks.*]

Ah, but the joy of life from this last draught
Runs stronger through my veins, and takes my
heart,

And now than ever more impossible

It seems to die ; I cannot, will not cease,
With this red liquor dancing thro' my blood.
If you must kill me, it must be by force,
I'll not be tamely haled by you along.
But ah, can you not spare me a short while ;
Look, I have money ; you, all three of you,
Shall live at ease if only I may breathe ;
Then hide me in this dungeon, and give out
That I am dead, I will reward you well.
You have no grudge against me ; one of you
Hide me and take the price !

JAILOR. Seize him at once,
Bear him without, and as the law enjoins,
Do with him : we have heard enough of speech,
I will not lose my office for soft talk.

EXECUTIONER. Nor I.

ASSISTANT. Nor I.

JAILOR. Then bear him quickly out !

[*They advance on LUIGI and seize him, when there is heard approaching the galloping sound of a horse's hoofs.*]

LUIGI. Listen! a horse's hoofs, and here they stop!

[There is a commotion outside and a
MESSENGER rushes in breathless with
a paper.]

MESSENGER. This from Pietro Tornielli,
straight
Despatched.

JAILOR. [*Opening and reading.*] Gonzaga,
you are free forthwith.

LUIGI. Free, free !

JAILOR. We have no further leave to keep
you,
There is the door—and there the world again.

LUIGI. But, but !

JAILOR. The reason of this freedom find
Without these walls, we have but to obey.

LUIGI. And yet I cannot——

[*A further noise without, then PULCI and
CARLO rush into the prison.*]

PULCI. Luigi, you are freed.
So much we heard and from the horseman
learned.

[*Exeunt the EXECUTIONER and ASSISTANT.*]

JAILOR. I wish you well, sir. What I said
I said
Because it is my office—fare you well.

LUIGI. But I am lost in this—farewell, good
fellow.

[*Exit JAILOR.*]
And you two have no joy in those your eyes ;

We have been friends—how long? Yet you
run hither,

Bringing me life and news of liberty,
With no wild word or clasp of sudden hand,
Nor steady grip, nor look of eye to eye.
Well, I am freed—ah, God!—I should rejoice!
Thou soaring sun, I come to thee again
To revel in thy splendour! I am given
Back once again to colour and the dew.
Well, let us quit this place; come, come, my
friends,

Yet, yet—again I say you seem to grieve
That I am snatched thus from the dismal grave.
Is my life hateful to you thus restored?
Speak, men, speak! There is some lurking cause
For such a funeral greeting from the tomb.
You, Carlo, if not Pulci, speak straight out!

CARLO. Luigi, you cannot think we are not
glad,

We two of all Siena, to behold you
Now freed, and passing to the outer air.

LUIGI. Yet still I say that something lurks
behind,
And I myself am not less guilty now
Than when committed—what my crimes were
then

Are now my crimes no less—yet I am freed.

PULCI. Luigi, the prison door is open now
Because your sister in the deep of night,
So is it said, for your sake yielded her
To Pietro Tornielli.

LUIGI. Ah, my God !

No, no, I'll not take life upon these terms.
I am shaken through all my being, I am changed ;
Where once I cowered, now I cower no more.
She, she—she knew I would not have this
bargain.

Now I will put my freedom to some use.
Call up our friends, however few they be,
And I will storm the palace and demand
My death—I'll ask it as a boon, as once
Life I demanded. Ah, I loathe to breathe,
And the great sun is blackening in the heaven.
Come with me, come !

PULCI. Some friends we have without
Already, more will join us as we go.

LUIGI. On to the palace ! on ! And let me
die !

SCENE II

SCENE.—*A hall in the palace of the GONZAGA.*
There is a sound of mutiny outside, and as the curtain rises ANSELMO breaks in accompanied by others of the troops, while sullen shouts are heard from outside.

ANSELMO. He is not here, he spends the
hours with her ;
Sirs, let us force these doors and slay the man
Who has betrayed us for a woman's eyes.
My sword is drawn!

ANOTHER. And mine.

ANOTHER. We'll follow you.
[Enter PIETRO.

PIETRO. Now, sirs !

ANSELMO. Pietro Tornielli, we
Have heard a rumour thro' Siena flying
That not alone the sister's life is spared,
But that, in hot desire for her, the brother

Too you have spared whom we all heard
condemned

Out of your own mouth ! So, then, we must
fight,

And follow you through peril and through death,
Only at last to be confronted thus ;

Our swords are nothing 'gainst a lady's eyes,

Our faith is nothing 'gainst our leader's lust,

[*Angry murmurs.*

Our services as air against her kiss.

Thus then I speak, and speaking speak for all—

Either we slay thee or we leave thee here

To riot and to passion and to wine.

But if I cannot for old memory

Plunge in thy heart this sword, I'll never draw

In such a cause again. I'll not be fooled,

[*Angry shouts.*

To fight and find all lost at last for lust.

So, Tornielli, fare you well for ever.

[*He is about to exit when LUIGI, after much commotion, bursts into the hall, followed by a retinue of followers.*

LUIGI. Now, Pietro Tornielli, face to face

We stand. I owe my freedom to your will ;

I am set free—no cause assigned, but freed.

Why then ? My sister's honour !

[*Pointing to his sister.*

And do you think
That for the madness of a night with her
Whom I have worshipped like the blessed saint,
Whose very tears were holy water, her blood
The very wine we drink not if we sin—
You think I'll take my life for such a fee?
Oh, I was craven, I deny it not ;
Here was the chance, then, here the basest lure
Ever proposed within a woman's ear—
She should submit to you and I go free !
No, death a thousand times, and death again !
I'll not contaminate the air henceforth,
And all shall cry " See, Luigi walks abroad
Freed by his sister's soil ! " If you will fight,
Then let us fight and without pause, and now ;
If not, I give myself again to death.

[*A door is thrown open and GEMMA comes in, PIETRO taking her hand.*

You, Gemma, though some may applaud this act,
I loathe you for it and for evermore.

Ah ! but perhaps it was no martyrdom !
Perhaps the sacrifice came easily,
Perhaps——

PIETRO. Enough is said. Now I will speak.
Luigi Gonzaga and Anselmo there,

It is most true that what you here have charged^{*}
Against me I did plan and did intend.

[*Murmurs.*

That fault is in my blood. But here I make
A holy oath, before all saints in heaven,
That she, this lady, stands by me untouched,
That she is pure as ever without spot.
Rather would she have killed me or herself
Than so submitted even for such a cause ;
But I, who have so played the game of love,
Am won to something nobler at the last :
To-day I make this lady my true wife.

GEMMA. Luigi, I should have died ere this
I did. [*Murmurs of astonishment.*

PIETRO. Her brother, who has thus refused
his life,

Knowing the truth will not refuse it more.
A golden morning on us all descends,
And I foresee a golden morning wax
Into a deeper life between us two,
Bringing not bloodshed nor old enmity,
But on our houses and Siena peace.

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